T
A
B

H

TAB H

"12. The effectiveness of close air support by type aircraft in support of land forces." (S)

STAG Comment. (TS) It is difficult to say which aircraft is most effective in a close air support role. If air cover or airborne alert is maintained on call the A-1 propeller driven aircraft has a definite advantage. Its slower speed allows greater accuracy. It can carry a heavy ordnance load and can loiter longer over the target. If however, reaction to request for immediate air support requires aircraft having a faster speed and reaction time, jet types are usually available. Listed below are average speeds, fully loaded, of various types of CAS aircraft.

A-1	250 knots	4 miles per min
F-100	360 knots	6 miles per min
F-105	360 knots	6 miles per min
F-4	360 knots	6 miles per min
A-4	360 knots	6 miles per min

These speeds can be exceeded but with a corresponding loss of range and/or loiter time. The introduction of the A-4 by the Navy and Marine Corps has added materially to the CAS capability. There are now 129 of this aircraft in the theater. This aircraft was designed with CAS in mind. It is a light weight aircraft that can deliver its own empty weight in armament over short distances. It can carry a maximum bomb load of over 4,000 lbs to a target up to 290 nautical mile radius in a Lo-Lo-Lo flight profile. The A-4 cannot match the A-1 as a loiter aircraft or in hauling a large bomb load a long distance, but it does apparently surpass other types of CAS aircraft currently in use in SVN. It can absorb heavy punishment and still fly. It is perhaps the least vulnerable single engine jet aircraft in SVN. The US Marine Corps has experienced a 95 percent in-service rate and its maintenance man-hours per flight did not rise when the aircraft entered combat.